

ADAPTING THE HUMANITIES DEGREE TO THE EHEA

INTRODUCTION

In addition to a re-examination of methodology and assessment systems, the process of adapting a course to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) often involves redefining the content of the various subjects.

This paper presents an example of how various conditioning factors, including the diversity of student profiles and the need for bimodal course organisation, led us to create new computer-based educational material.

Specifically, we developed an interactive portal that offers educational materials, audiovisual content and a self-assessment tool.

Many of the methods used under the European Credit Transfer System involve information and communication technologies (ICTs) and, in particular, specific platforms for teaching a subject.

These technologies offer major advantages, such as blended learning, that is, the combination of face-to-face and distance learning. Under such a system, the support of high-quality material allows students to work independently.

ELENA AÑAÑOS
Innovation Area
IDES

UAB

Universitat Autònoma
de Barcelona

THE ADAPTATION OF LATIN AND CLASSICAL CULTURE TO THE EHEA



Titulació d'Humanitats : Cultura clàssica

PRESENTACIÓ PROFESSORAT ASSIGNATURES TEMES CAPÍTOLS TEXTOS BIBLIOGRAFIA QUESTIONARIS [+]

08/11/2006

Pàgines docents d'humanitats

Benvinguts/-des,

Les pàgines que us oferim a continuació serveixen de complement a l'assignatura obligatòria "Llatí i Cultura Clàssica" de la titulació d'Humanitats de la UAB i amb aquest objectiu han estat pensades i creades. No pretenem convertir l'assignatura en virtual -la presència a l'aula és indiscutible; no hem de perdre de vista que estem en una universitat presencial- però sí oferir materials de suport a tots els estudiants i en particular a aquells que, per raons diverses, en moments determinats del curs, no poden assistir a classe. Els materials que presentem descriuen una part important dels canvis que hem hagut de fer a l'hora d'adaptar la nostra assignatura a crèdits europeus. Recordem que la titulació

Because it implies transformations in many areas – degrees offered, syllabuses, subjects and, especially, the conception of the new curriculum – the European convergence process presents a challenge to all universities. The process abandons the traditional conception based on the number of classroom hours in favour of a new conception based on student learning and a new method for calculating the workload.

This paper discusses the methodological experimentation carried out in Latin and Classical Culture, a compulsory subject in the first year of the Humanities degree.

We decided to re-examine the conception of this subject for several reasons:

1) A new syllabus for the Humanities degree was introduced for the 2002/03 academic year.

2) Under the previous Humanities syllabus, Latin Language and Greek and Latin Literature were two separate subjects. Under the new syllabus, these two subjects have been combined into a single core subject: Classical Latin and Culture.

3) Due to the cross-curricular nature and admissions conditions of the Humanities degree, the students taking this subject come from a range of academic backgrounds:

a) Students with a Humanities high-school diploma. This group's education is closely related to the content of the subject.

b) Students with a Social Sciences high-school diploma. These students have little or no knowledge of the Greco-Roman world.

Unitat d'Innovació Docent
en Educació Superior (IDES)

Edifici A
Campus de la UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès)
Tel.: 93 581 41 66
Fax: 93 581 41 67
ides@uab.es
www.uab.es/ides

Equip de la Unitat

Dra. Maite Martínez
Directora

Dra. Elena Añaños
Àmbit d'Innovació

Sarai Sabaté
Àmbit de Formació

Núria Marzo
Pere Tomasa
Equip col·laborador

Lluïsa Agudo
Jordi Grau
Suport administratiu

Edició i impressió

Servei de Publicacions
de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

c) Students who took the entrance exam for over 25s. On the whole, this group is more mature and has greater general knowledge, but lacks specific knowledge on the subject. In the past two years, this group has grown significantly.

d) Students who hold a university degree in the humanities or the sciences. This group is admitted to the second cycle but is required to take this subject as additional training.

4) The subjects must be taught using blended learning in order to attract the interest of people in employment who cannot attend a course based solely on face-to-face learning, but who refuse to resign themselves to a course based entirely on distance learning. The Humanities degree is one of the most popular courses among students in this situation.

5) We need to design and offer educational support materials (illustrations, plans, maps, etc) that are hard to provide in high quality without using computers.

During the 2002/03 academic year, we applied for a UAB educational-innovation grant and began developing educational materials to be made available through the Virtual Campus.

In March 2004, the Catalan Ministry of Universities, Research and the Information Society (DURSI) invited Catalan universities to adapt some of their degree programmes to the future European model while maintaining their current syllabuses. Under this Pilot Plan, each university created undergraduate degrees that were recognised and supported by the DURSI. The Faculty of Philosophy and Arts decided to adapt two courses: Geography and Humanities.

This decision led to the second major re-examination of the subject. In this case, in addition to developing educational materials for blended learning, we considered new learning-assessment systems. Thanks to a grant from the Catalan Agency for Administration of University and Research Grants (2005MQD 00208), we were able to implement a new project that went beyond developing new interactive materials by promoting self-learning, self-assessment and distance tutorials. We created an interactive portal where the content covered in class is recorded. Selected texts (with translations and comments) that are representative of each writer's style are included in order to illustrate the author's approach to literary creation. Audiovisual support materials (images, CDs, etc.) are also provided. There is an objective test after each section so that students may self-assess their learning at any time.

As we designed this website, we asked ourselves what skills we wanted to assess

for this subject. The teaching staff decided to maintain the continuous assessment system based on objective tests and essays, and also to introduce, for the first time, an assessment system based on learning portfolios.

At the beginning of the academic year, students are asked to choose from a list of topics related to classical tradition. They are required to write an individual paper on the topic by the end of the academic year. The lecturer acts as a tutor throughout the course of the year, continually monitoring the student's progress. Because several students may choose the same topic, the lecturer proposes different ways of approaching the project. Students writing on the same topic must work together to develop a joint final presentation. This project provides an opportunity to better assess the students' cross-curricular skills: analysis and synthesis, written expression, interpersonal skills, team management, oral expression, etc. This project, which accounts for 40% of the final mark for the subject, cultivates a cross-curricular outlook by compelling students to work with a range of content, including ancient history, literature, art and computing. The website for the subject provides information on how to write the paper and how cross-curricular skills are assessed.

Students enrolled in the subject this year have had access to this platform. We hope that it has improved both our teaching strategies and the students' education.

As pioneers in adaptation to the EHEA, we would like to tell the entire campus community that this process is worthwhile. It has forced us to re-examine the type of student we train, the content we offer and the skills we expect upon completion of the course. Despite the many uncertainties that have vexed us throughout the pilot programme, which was introduced in 2004/05 and will finish in 2006/07, we believe that this reflection process is worth the effort.

Our website:

<http://claudia.uab.cat:81>

Project director:
GEMMA PUIGVERT PLANAGUMÀ
Departament de Ciències
de l'Antiguitat i de l'Edat Mitjana
Dinamitzadora del pla pilot DURSI
de la titulació d'Humanitats
Edifici B, Campus de la UAB
08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès)
Tel. 93 581 24 42
gemma.puigvert@uab.es

Collaborators:
J. Carbonell, F. Carbajo, J. A. Iglesias

